

State of California & The Resources Agency  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
**PRIMARY RECORD**

Primary #  
HRI #  
Trinomial  
**NRHP Status Code**

Review Code      Other Listings      Date  
Reviewer

Page 1 of \_\_\_\_      \*Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) \_\_\_\_\_

**P1. Other Identifier:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*P2. Location:**     Not for Publication     Unrestricted

\*a. County Marin and (P2c, P2e, and P2b or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

\*b. USGS 7.5' Quad San Rafael- Marin County, Ca Date 1993 T \_\_\_\_; R \_\_\_\_; of \_\_\_\_ of Sec \_\_\_\_ B.M.

c. Address East Downtown Commercial Historic District City San Rafael Zip 94901

d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone \_\_, \_\_ mE/ \_\_ mN

e. Other Locational Data: Being a district encompassing the commercial corridor of downtown San Rafael on the axis of B and Fourth Streets.

**\*P3a. Description:** The East Downtown San Rafael Historic District is located in the heart of historic San Rafael along the City's traditional principal commercial thoroughfare, which is part of the City's central orthogonal grid. Fourth Street runs east-west, creating a continuous commercial corridor between court street and Lincoln Ave. The District exhibits the typical features of a traditional business district. The streets are 30 to 40 feet wide and have two lanes flanked by parking lanes and mature street trees of different species. Sidewalks are mostly concrete, with brick in some locations, and widen near intersections to create space for planting strips with concrete benches.

**\*P3b. Resource Attributes:** HP6

**\*P4. Resources Present:**

Building  Structure  Object  Site X District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)

**P5b. Description of Photo:**

Aerial photo (Google earth 2020)

P5a. Photograph or Drawing



**\*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source:**

Historic  Prehistoric  Both

**\*P7. Owner and Address:**

City of San Rafael  
San Rafael, Marin, CA, 94901.

**\*P8. Recorded by:**

Garavaglia Architecture, Inc.  
582 Market Street, Suite 1800  
San Francisco, CA 94104

**\*P9. Date Recorded:**

June 1, 2020

**\*P10. Survey Type:**

Intensive Survey

**\*P11. Report Citation:** N/A

**\*Attachments:**  NONE  Location Map  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and Object Record

Archaeological Record  District Record

Linear Feature Record  Milling Station

Record  Rock Art Record

Artifact Record  Photograph Record  Other (List): \_\_\_\_\_



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\*NRHP Status Code \_\_\_\_\_

\*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) \_\_\_\_\_

D1. Historic Name: \_\_\_\_\_

D2. Common Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*D3. Detailed Description** (Discuss overall coherence of the district, its setting, visual characteristics, and minor features. List all elements of district.):  
The District is characterized by one- to four-story commercial buildings that occupy their entire parcels; main building facades have uniform setbacks immediately adjacent to the sidewalk and most side elevations are not visible. This pattern is virtually unbroken along the subject portion of Fourth street. Buildings exhibit a variety of commercial architectural styles representing the District's period of significance: Italianate and Queen Anne storefront buildings from the late nineteenth century, Mission, Spanish Revival, and Art Deco buildings from the early twentieth century, and a few examples of Mid-century Modernism.

In the twenty-first century the District is characterized by heavy foot traffic and a high density of retail and dining businesses. The area now features many banking institutions, retail shops and restaurants.

**\*D4. Boundary Description** (Describe limits of district and attach map showing boundary and district elements.):  
The district extends east from Court Street creating a nearly continuous zone of one to two-story commercial structures along Fourth Street. The Fourth Street corridor is dominated by pedestrian traffic with most east-west auto traffic directed along the one-way couplet on Third and Second Streets, just south of the district. The district extends down both north and south sides of Fourth to the intersection of Lincoln Ave. The proposed district is an area of mixed-use retail, financial, commercial and dining structures that embodies the development of San Rafael's downtown over the last century and more.

**\*D5. Boundary Justification:**  
The East Downtown San Rafael Historic District is centered on Fourth Street, one of San Rafael most important historic thoroughfares. The district encompasses the contiguous and historically significant portion of the Fourth Street corridor east of B Street and the Modern banking structures which divide the two downtown historic districts. Its boundaries enclose an area of Downtown San Rafael that exhibits a strong concentration of contributing resources that retain sufficient character to convey the district's historical role as the heart of the community's business, social, and government activities.

D6. **Significance: Theme** Residential, Commercial, and Civic Development **Area** Downtown San Rafael  
**Period of Significance** 1898-1930 **Applicable Criteria** A/1 and C/3 (Discuss district's importance in terms of its historical context as defined by theme, period of significance, and geographic scope. Also address the integrity of the district as a whole.)  
(continued page 10)

**\*D7. References:**

**\*D8. Evaluator:** Kara Brunzell

**\*Date of Evaluation:** July 31, 2020

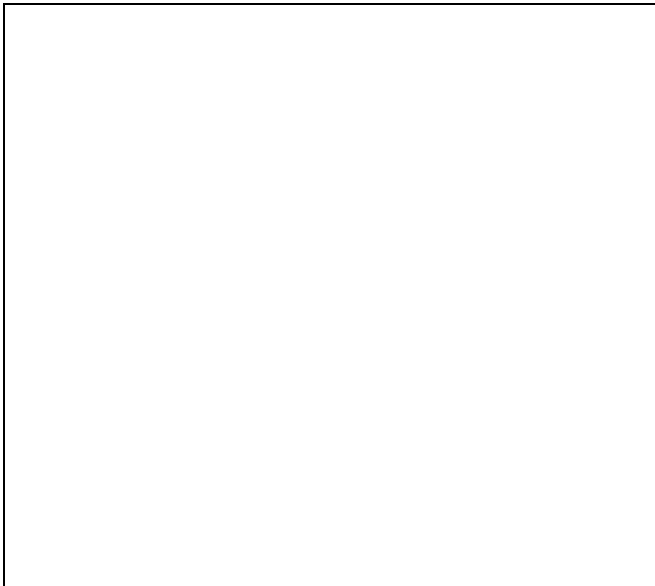
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\*D3. Detailed Description: (continued)



<b>Address/APN:</b> 812 Fourth st / 011-224-11
<b>Year Built:</b> 1920/1950/1971
<b>Description:</b> The one story storefront commercial building is rectangular in plan with arched roof and shaped parapet. Its recessed main entrance has an arched door flanked by arched multiple light wood windows. Divided storefront windows are contemporary.
<b>Integrity:</b> Retains Integrity
<b>Significance:</b> Good if modest example of Mission commercial architecture, not a landmark, potentially a district contributor.



<b>Address/APN:</b> 813 (817) Fourth St /
<b>Year Built:</b>
<b>Description:</b> Missing evaluation
<b>Integrity:</b>
<b>Significance:</b>

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\*Date: July 31, 2020  Continuation  Update



<b>Address/APN:</b> 827-831 Fourth St / 011-273-02
<b>Year Built:</b> Predates 1924 (sanborn)
<b>Description:</b> The one story storefront commercial building is rectangular in plan with gabled roof concealed by a parapet. The building is stucco with terracotta ornament including cartouche and arch motif at parapet corners. Storefront windows are topped by floral frieze and large multiple light transoms with decorative turned posts and scrolled moulding. The partially glazed wood door is topped by a transom and set in an elaborately shaped arch. A cartouche with ornate floral and candle motifs tops the door. 827 Fourth originally had a vehicle door leading to a repair area behind the showroom and retains scrolled moulding and parapet that matches the primary building.
<b>Integrity:</b> Retains Integrity
<b>Significance:</b> Excellent example of Mission architecture, eligible as landmark and district contributor



<b>Address/APN:</b> 836 Fourth St / 011-224-13
<b>Year Built:</b> 1924 (sanborn)
<b>Description:</b> The single-story commercial building is rectangular in plan with a gabled roof hidden by a shaped parapet. The main (south) façade is occupied by large contemporary storefront windows and centered entrance. Cladding is brick with stuccoed areas. Decorative corbelling is also executed in brick.
<b>Integrity:</b> Retains Integrity
<b>Significance:</b> Good simple example of Mission architecture, District Contributor.

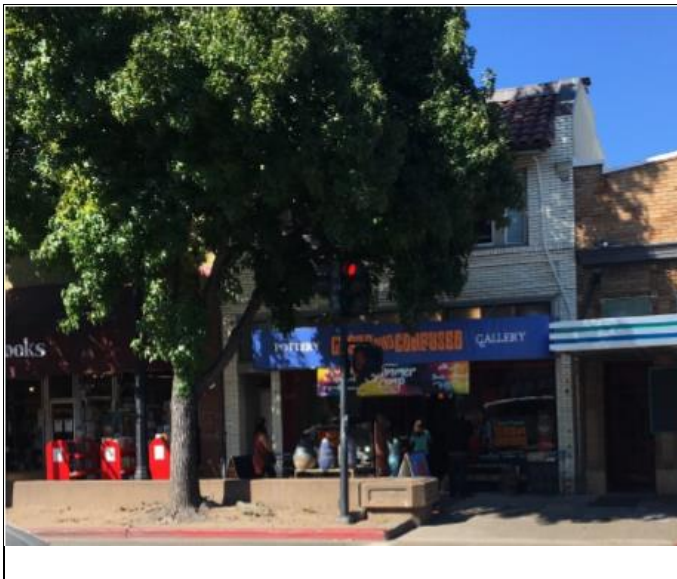
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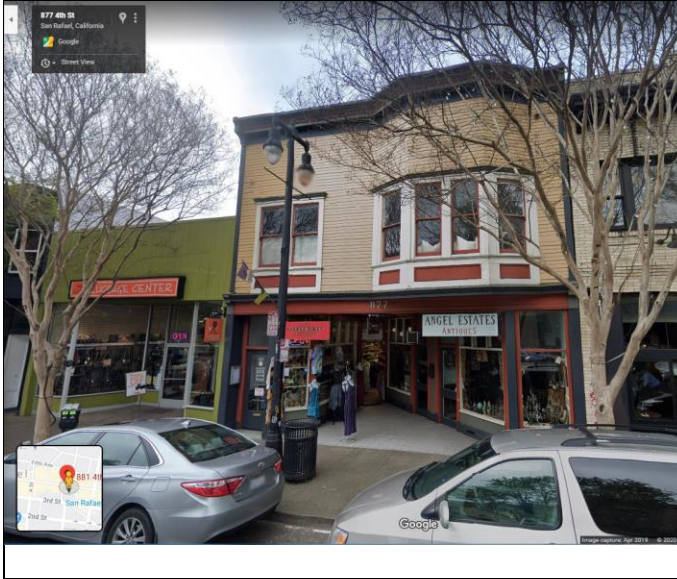


<b>Address/APN:</b> 842 Fourth St / 011-224-14
<b>Year Built:</b> 1929
<b>Description:</b> The single-story commercial building is L-shaped in plan with a flat roof and stepped parapet. The main (south) façade is occupied by small windows above a paneled bulkhead and two entrances at its west end. A metal awning with a small marquee projects from the façade above the storefront level. Transoms above the awning appear to have been partially covered. There is a cornice between transoms and parapet. The building is clad in brick with columns articulated in contrasting color brick and tile column bases.
<b>Integrity:</b> Retains integrity, probable alterations to storefront level are sympathetic.
<b>Significance:</b> Good example of Mission architecture, eligible as district contributor.



<b>Address/APN:</b> 846 Fourth Street / 011-224-14
<b>Year Built:</b> 1908 -1924 (sanborn)
<b>Description:</b> The two story commercial building is rectangular in plan with a flat roof and parapet and decorative tiled shed roof with shaped rafter tails. The main (south) façade is occupied by large contemporary storefront windows and centered entrance. Cladding is glazed brick with decorative tile bulkhead. Decorative frieze separating ground and second stories is also executed in brick. Tripartate upstairs windows are fitted with replacements. The recessed entrance is flanked by slanted storefronts and fitted with a fully glazed wood panel door. There are divided light transoms above the storefront. The entrance to the upstairs is fitted with a replacement door.
<b>Integrity:</b> Retains Integrity
<b>Significance:</b> Good example early twentieth century commercial storefront, eligible as district contributor.

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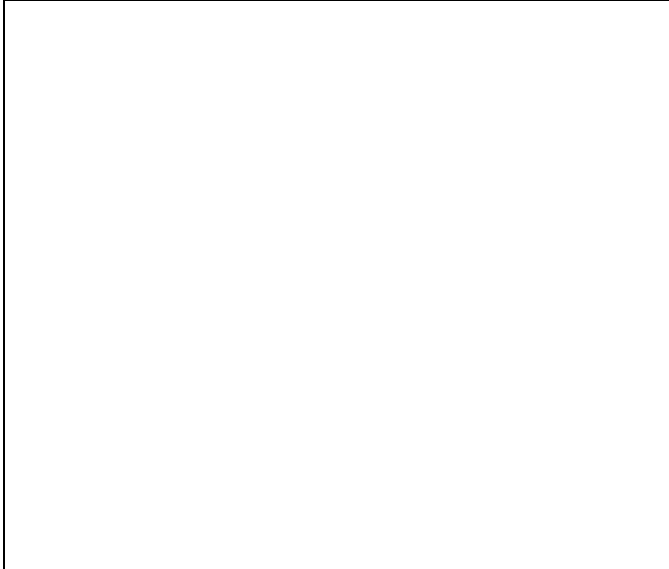
<b>Address/APN:</b> 881-883 Fourth Street / 011-271-03
<b>Year Built:</b> 1905 (DPR)
<b>Description:</b> The commercial building is two story and rectangular in plan with a flat roof and stepped parapet. The building is clad in narrow wood siding with stucco at the ground floor. The cornice features decorative rafter tails and dentil moulding. Projecting upstairs bays have tripartite replacement windows. Replacement storefronts are contemporary and not sympathetic.
<b>Integrity:</b> Retains Integrity
<b>Significance:</b> Eligible as district contributor and landmark.



<b>Address/APN:</b> 885-887 Fourth Street/ 011-271-02
<b>Year Built:</b> 1910/1975
<b>Description:</b> The commercial building is two story and rectangular in plan with a flat roof. It has a stepped parapet and heavy wood cornice with decorative rafter tails. Tripartite upstairs windows have been fitted with fairly sympathetic replacement windows. The building is clad in brick with mouldings and windows sills also executed in brick. Original obscure transom has been retained above the door to the upstairs. Replacement storefront and doors are sympathetic.
<b>Integrity:</b> Retains integrity despite replacement window and storefront, appearance similar to 1970s photos.
<b>Significance:</b> Eligible as a landmark and district contributor.



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<b>Address/APN:</b> 887
<b>Year Built:</b>
<b>Description:</b> No evaluation
<b>Integrity:</b>
<b>Significance:</b>



<b>Address/APN:</b> 882-884 Fourth St (1010 Lootens) / 011-224-18
<b>Year Built:</b> 1910
<b>Description:</b> The lodge/commercial building is two story and rectangular in plan with a flat roof. The building is clad in brick and has facades on Fourth and Lootens. The heavy cornice features decorative brackets and dentil moulding, there is also decorative moulding separating upper and lower floors. Storefronts and doors have been replaced, and original transoms are covered except over the central entrance on Fourth Street leading to the lodge rooms.
<b>Integrity:</b> Retains sufficient integrity for listing as district contributor despite replacement windows and storefronts.
<b>Significance:</b> Eligible as district contributor, lacks integrity for landmark status

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<b>Address/APN:</b> 917 Fourth St / 011-263-08
<b>Year Built:</b> c1920
<b>Description:</b> The commercial building is one story and rectangular in plan with a flat roof. It is clad in stucco and has ornate terracotta decorative cornice and moulding on its tall parapet. It has a paneled frieze and shell, Grecian urn, and botanical motifs. The transom has shaped openings divided by diminutive turned posts and fitted with multiple-light windows. There is a small marquee on the upper façade. The storefront is contemporary
<b>Integrity:</b> Retains Integrity
<b>Significance:</b> Excellent example of 1920s commercial architecture, eligible as district contributor and landmark



<b>Address/APN:</b> 925 Fourth Street / 011-263-07
<b>Year Built:</b> 1928
<b>Description:</b> The commercial building is two story and rectangular in plan with a flat roof. It is clad in stucco and has ornate terracotta decorative surrounds on vertical upstairs windows, which are fitted with vinyl replacement sash. A decorative balconet at the mezzanine level has a shaped opening and is flanked by transom divided by diminutive turned posts. The storefront is contemporary
<b>Integrity:</b> Retains Integrity
<b>Significance:</b> Good example of 1920s commercial architecture, eligible as district contributor.

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<b>Address/APN:</b> 1001 Lincoln Avenue (806 4 <sup>th</sup> )/ 011-224-10
<b>Year Built:</b>
<b>Description:</b> The two-story building has a rectangular plan. The roof consists of two side-byside composition shingle gables, hidden on both the street-facing sides of the corner lot by a slanted parapet supported by decorative molding and brackets. The main façade contains two first-floor storefronts consisting primarily of large plate-glass windows, with brick bulkheads and narrow vertical board siding between the windows. On the second floor and other façades, the building is clad in horizontal board siding. Upstairs windows have been replaced.
<b>Integrity:</b> Retains Integrity despite window replacements
<b>Significance:</b> Eligible as district contributor, lacks integrity required for landmark.

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**\*D6. Significance (continued):**

Historic Context of San Rafael

The area that is now the City of San Rafael was once the site of several Coast Miwok villages, including the village of Nanaguani along San Rafael Creek, inhabited by the Aguasto tribe.<sup>1</sup> In 1817, Mission San Rafael Arcángel was founded as the 20th of 21 Spanish missions in the Spanish colonial province of Alta California. Originally planned as an *asistencia* (hospital) for Native Americans who became ill at Mission Dolores in present day San Francisco, San Rafael Arcángel gained full mission status in 1822.<sup>2</sup>

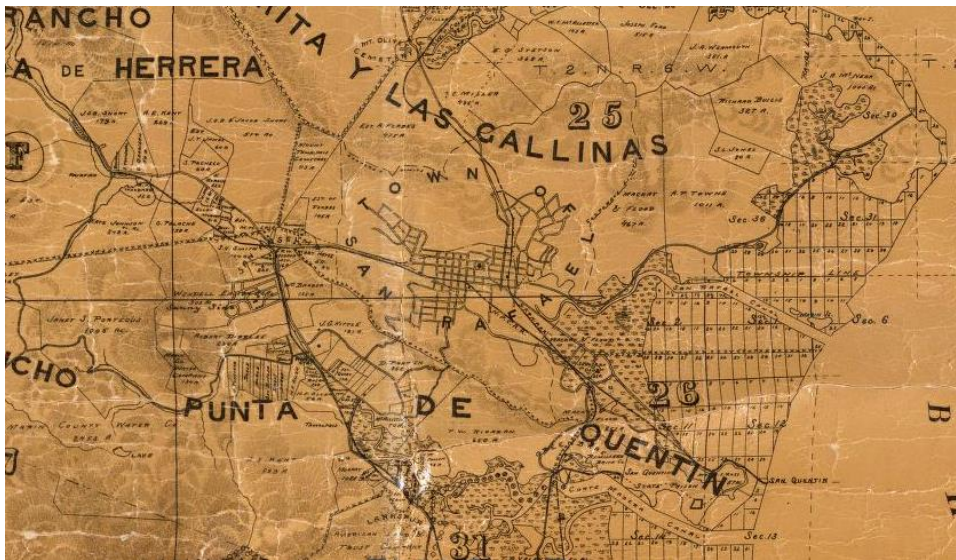


Figure 2: Official county map of Marin County. Produced by H. Austin, 1873.

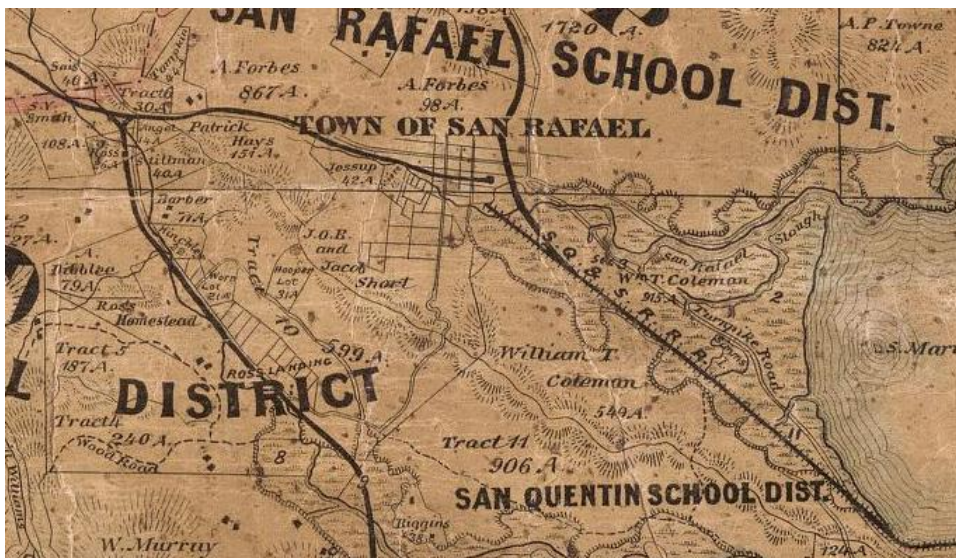


Figure 3: Official county map of Marin County. Produced by George M. Dodge, 1892.

Mission San Rafael was noted for its abundant agricultural products including vineyards, orchards, grain, and thousands of sheep, cattle and

<sup>1</sup> Marin County History Museum, Images of America: Early San Rafael, (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2008), 9.

<sup>2</sup> "History of San Rafael," San Rafael Chamber, website. Accessed April 24, 2019. <http://srchamber.com/history-of-san-rafael/>; and, "History of Mission San Rafael Arcangel," California Missions Foundation, website. Accessed April 24, 2019. <http://californiamissionsfoundation.org/mission-san-rafael/>.

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horses.<sup>3</sup> Following the secularization of the missions in 1834, the mission was placed under the control of administrators. In 1837, Timothy Murphy was appointed as administrator, and by 1844, was granted three contiguous parcels that were eventually divided into smaller tracts, shaping the boundaries of San Rafael.<sup>4</sup> The Mission itself declined rapidly as an economic or political force in San Rafael and was largely abandoned by 1840. The ruins of the Mission were removed in 1870 and what stands on the site now are reconstructions from 1919 and 1949.<sup>5</sup>

#### 1850-1906: Early Growth of San Rafael

San Rafael grew gradually after California statehood in 1850, and was named seat of Marin County in 1851. Following the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869, the construction of Marin County Courthouse in 1872, and incorporation in 1874, San Rafael entered a period of accelerated growth. The discovery of gold in California led to a massive influx of new residents to California and eventually San Rafael. Several individuals who immigrated to California during the Gold Rush played foundational roles in the civic development of the city. William Tell Coleman, who had moved to San Rafael in 1871, was influential in the construction of the Marin County Courthouse, in the development of the water system, promotion of the railroad, and construction of the Hotel Rafael.<sup>6</sup> During this period nearly all of San Rafael's first generation of buildings were lost including the original Mission buildings. Over the ensuing decades leading into the twentieth century, the town built out as freight, passenger, and interurban railway to Sausalito ferry extensions were completed.<sup>7</sup> The streetscape of San Rafael's commercial downtown continued to develop along a typical pattern of regional growth from the late 1860s to the 1890s, when the advances in transportation technologies and expansion in services determined the location for housing and businesses.



Figure 4: Grand Carnival Parade, Fourth Street San Rafael. September 9<sup>th</sup>, 1908.

Transportation infrastructure also included the inauguration of ferry service from Point San Quentin including a short rail line connecting San Rafael to the ferry and the completion a railroad from Petaluma through San Rafael to Tiburon. Faster and more reliable electric train service was introduced in 1903.<sup>8</sup> The railroad's arrival started a modest hospitality industry for summer and weekend visitors that contributed to the growth of the town, with the opening of several hotels, saloons, and specialty shops.<sup>9</sup> Development of the San Rafael Canal (San Rafael Creek) led to the emergence of commercial activity around the tidal estuary linking San Francisco to the communities, ranches, and farms along the bay and sloughs. The most notable remaining example of this industry is the McNear Brick Yard adjacent to the Dutra Quarry.

<sup>3</sup> California Missions Resource Center, San Rafael Arcángel Key Facts. (2019). Retrieved July 29, 2020, from <https://missionscalifornia.com/san-rafael-arcangel-mission/key-facts>

<sup>4</sup> Images of America: Early San Rafael, 19.

<sup>5</sup> California Missions Foundation. (2017, September 03). San Rafael Arcángel. Retrieved July 29, 2020, from <http://californiamissionsfoundation.org/mission-san-rafael/>

<sup>6</sup> Images of America: Early San Rafael, 28.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 37.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 37.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 37.

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Commercial development in the downtown began in the mid-1860s. John A. Davis and Daniel T. Taylor were credited with opening the first general store, which was immediately followed by a meat market.<sup>10</sup> By 1866, the town had three stores, two hotels, two boarding houses, one restaurant, two Point San Quentin.<sup>11</sup> The North Pacific Coast Railroad (NPC) followed in 1871, which provided San Rafael with a spur track that connected San Anselmo to the station at B Street. A new depot was constructed on Tamalpais Avenue between Third and Fourth Streets in 1884. stables, three boot makers, two blacksmith shops, a butcher shop, a clock maker, a barber, three lawyers, and a physician.<sup>12</sup> This period saw Fourth Street become San Rafael's "Main Street" with retail and commerce centered on the east-west thoroughfare. The rail station at B and Second streets also became a hub of activity with a smaller commercial district beginning to grow on the north-south axis connecting the rail junction to Fourth Street. Commercial activity also sprang up along Fourth and B Streets, in the pocket connecting both rail lines. By the 1890's San Rafael was a commercial and cultural center and was taking on a shape we can recognize today. Fourth Street was a premier shopping area, with the largest department store in Marin County (owned by Jacob Albert and located at 1216 Fourth Street). A Chinese community had begun to grow around the east side of C Street.<sup>13</sup> This period saw the construction of many large residential buildings, some of which still stand today.<sup>14</sup> Commercial streets developed during this period feature a mixture of one-story single-business establishments and multi-story mixed-use buildings (typically residential, hotel rooms, or offices above ground-floor storefronts). Commercial buildings aligned with turn-of-the century regional trends, and increasingly featured multiple, narrow storefronts. Stylistically, the design of commercial buildings from this period was closely aligned with Victorian-period residential architectural styles.<sup>15</sup>



Figure 5: Intersection of A and Fourth Streets looking west, c1920. Anne T. Kent California Room.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 59.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 37.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 59.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 59-70.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 67-68.

<sup>15</sup> City and County of San Francisco Planning Department, *Neighborhood Commercial Buildings: Historic Context Statement 1865-1965-Draft for Public Review*, February 17, 2016.

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1906-1937: Post Earthquake to the opening of the Golden Gate Bridge

In the later years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century San Rafael had begun to be seen by some San Franciscans as a desirable escape from city life. Wealthy San Franciscans such as AP Hotaling, John H Reddington, William Tell Coleman, and Robert Dollar began to relocate to San Rafael, after regular ferry services became available travel between the two cities. There was an influx of new residents following the San Francisco earthquake and fire in 1906. The new population triggered new development including in the residential neighborhoods on the borders of the new downtown. The expansion of these neighborhoods created a foundation for the mixed residential/commercial areas in what is now the West End and neighborhoods north of downtown such as the Proposed Conservation District One. The early twentieth century saw a huge interest in the civic life of San Rafael, with the establishment of a Marin County Board of Supervisors, a local National Guard company, and construction of new civic buildings.<sup>16</sup>

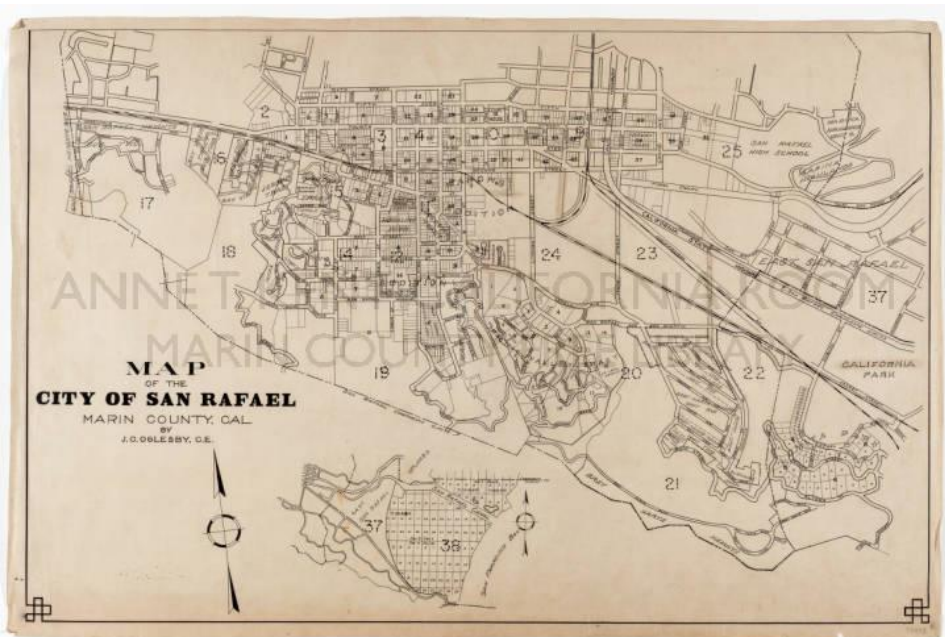


Figure 6: Map of the City of San Rafael, 1929. J.C Oglesby collection in the Anne T. Kent California Room.

Examples of this period in San Rafael’s urban development can be seen in the Classical Revival San Rafael Improvement Club which was built for the 1915 Panama-Pacific exhibition and floated across the bay from San Francisco. The building became the staging area for mosquito eradication programs and other projects. The Public Library, which still stands at the corner of Fifth and E Streets, anchoring the northern end of the Proposed Downtown Commercial/Civil Historic District, is another prime example of civic architecture of the period.<sup>17</sup>

The growth of nearby military installations such as Hamilton Army Air Base would also result in considerable impacts on downtown growth and commerce and sets stage for post-war suburban growth though little of that growth occurred near Downtown.

The early Twentieth Century saw a transformation of transportation infrastructure in San Rafael, beginning with the relocation of passenger ferry service from Tiburon to Sausalito and the construction of the Northwestern Pacific electric interurban railway system from the Sausalito ferry terminal. The interurban system was soon providing commuter service from southern Marin, the Ross Valley and San Rafael to San Francisco.

<sup>16</sup> *Images of America: Early San Rafael*, 37.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 37.

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Figure 7: View of Fourth Street looking east, 1932. Anne T. Kent California Room.

As late as 1903, nearly two decades after their invention, automobiles were banned from many Marin County roads, prohibited from night use, and limited to a 15 mile-per-hour speed. In 1909, a winding series of roads leading from Sausalito through the other towns of Marin County was designated a California state highway, an early step in the transformation of California's built environment around the personal automobile. Entering San Rafael from the west, the highway traveled along Fourth Street before turning north and leaving San Rafael via Lincoln Avenue. The federal government had authorized the construction of US 101 in 1925, and by 1929 its Marin County route was under development. By the mid-1930s, US 101 was handling 1.5 million cars annually. Population growth and ever-increasing reliance on automobile transportation created demand for additional infrastructure, and federal funding made available by the New Deal allowed construction on the Golden Gate Bridge to begin in 1933.<sup>18</sup>

#### 1937-1945: Opening of Golden Gate Bridge and the Second World War

The opening of the Golden Gate Bridge in 1937, and the increasing popularity of the automobile, created a new connectivity between Marin County and San Francisco, effectively ending the rail transit era. The last commuter train departed from San Rafael in 1941, the same year a viaduct for Highway 101 was completed over San Rafael creek.<sup>19</sup> This raised freeway alignment through the heart of San Rafael alongside the railroad tracks created a visual and physical barrier between east and central San Rafael. Though San Rafael was still a satellite of San Francisco it had now entered a period of increasing prosperity with the town's first Highrise building, the Albert Building, being completed a few years earlier. San Rafael was also now home to several opera houses and theatres including The Orpheus, Gordon's Opera House, and the Rafael Theatre.

These changes were accelerated by the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor in December of 1941 and the entry of the US into World War II. The larger Bay Area became a major hub for wartime industry, mainly shipping and arms production, bringing waves of migration and development to San Rafael. San Rafael's proximity to Point Richmond, the Mare Island ship yards and Marin Ship in Sausalito caused a severe housing shortage and the construction of many new homes, even including the subdivision of existing housing. These events refocused new development to provide locally oriented goods and services to many working families now residing in San Rafael. Even as the automobile became more ubiquitous, neighborhoods like the West End developed a "village" like character of small shops and residences. This period also saw the beginnings of larger auto-focused developments, like those seen east of the freeway in Montecito.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Jim Wood, History of a Highway, Marin Magazine, April 17, 2009, <https://marinmagazine.com/community/history/history-of-a-highway/>, accessed July 20, 2020.

<sup>19</sup> Marin County History Museum, *Images of America: Modern San Rafael: 1940-2000*, (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2008), 14.

<sup>20</sup> *Images of America: Early San Rafael*, 37; and, *Images of America: Modern San Rafael: 1940-2000*, 9.



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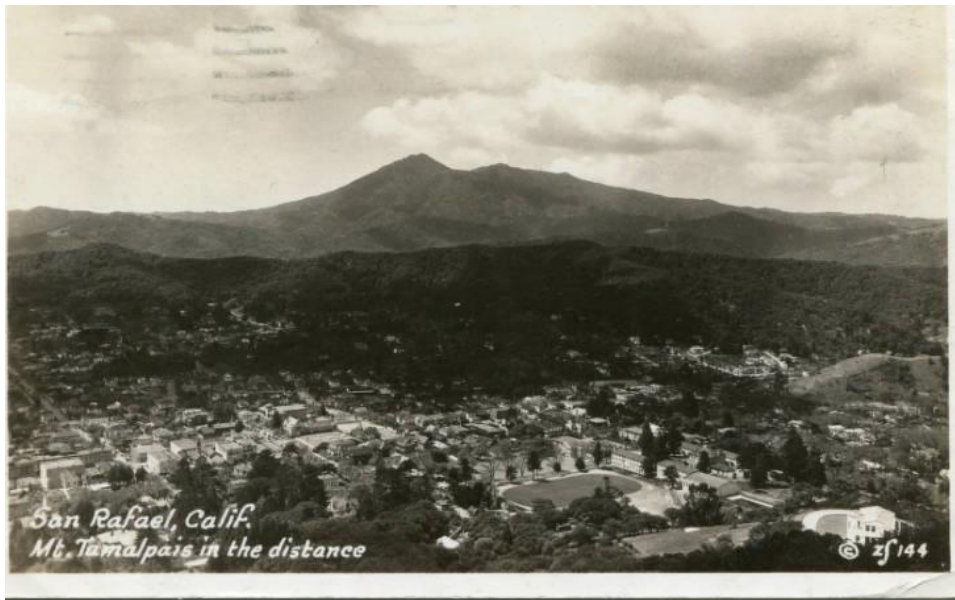


Figure 8: View of San Rafael looking west with Mt. Tamalpais in Background, 1937. Anne T. Kent California Room.

Following the war, housing starts increased, and the Sun Valley, Terra Linda, Glenwood, Peacock Gap and Marinwood neighborhoods were developed on former ranch lands from 1953 through the 1970's. Industries around San Rafael Canal also continued well into the 1950's including petroleum sales for other local industries.



Figure 9: View looking west from Fourth and B Streets, 1947. Anne T. Kent California Room.

#### 1945-1970: Post War

During the post war years especially between 1953 and 1955, the construction of San Rafael's housing stock continued to increase. The development of the Terra Linda and Marinwood neighborhoods on former ranch lands are just one example of San Rafael's expansion at this time. Ferry strikes beginning in the late 1940s led to construction of another bridge and the demise of ferry service between San Rafael and Richmond. Completion of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge in 1956 added another element of auto-oriented infrastructure to the region.

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In the years immediately after the war, Fourth Street emerged as the commercial and cultural center of Marin County. San Rafael's downtown continued to prosper, as department stores, restaurants, the County Courthouse, City Hall and even the first Kaiser Permanente clinic in town, combined with churches, nearby residences, and emerging postwar industries to define the modern city. The explosive growth occurring in San Rafael at the time can be seen in shifts of building materials, techniques and location during the post war period. Rapid construction of many inexpensive commercial buildings took place on recently drained lands that had been the marshy floor of the San Rafael Valley, expanding the town's footprint into previously open space. Other notable examples of construction during this period can be found in the Eichler homes in the Terra Linda and Marinwood neighborhoods. The Period of Significance for the Proposed Downtown Commercial/Civil Historic Districts are bookended by the completion of a second Viaduct of Highway 101 over San Rafael creek in 1971, completing a transformation from Spanish frontier outpost to bustling American city.



Figure 10: View Looking west from Fourth and B Streets, 1963. Anne T. Kent California Room.

Development of large department stores anchored regional shopping centers at Northgate in Terra Linda and the Village in Corte Madera in the 1960s and 1970s and eroded Downtown San Rafael's dominance as the county's retail destination. From the mid-twentieth century to the present, San Rafael's Downtown continues to be centered on its Fourth Street and B Street commercial corridors, which still display a great variety of period architecture from the 1860s through the mid-twentieth century, embodied in its stores, banks and restaurants. Initially centered on the Mission and maritime routes to San Francisco, San Rafael became, in turn, a Railroad depot, a regional wartime economic center, an auto-oriented county seat, and finally the commercial and cultural center of Marin County. The changing character of San Rafael is embodied in its varied architectural forms which continue to demonstrate the course of the town's development.

Timeline:

pre-1800 – San Rafael area is home to Coast Miwok Villages

1817 – Mission Dolores opens a hospital “Asistencia de San Rafael Arcángel”

1822 – The asistencia is elevated to full mission status; Misión San Rafael Arcángel

1834 – Secularization of Missions

1848 – Alta California is annexed into the United States following the Mexican-American War

1848 – 1852 California Gold Rush

1870 – China Camp emerges as a shrimping village on Mc Near lands

? – Schooner/Steamer passenger service from Point San Quentin to San Francisco begins with stage coach to San Rafael

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1870 – The San Rafael and San Quentin railroad begins operation

1872 – The Marin County Courthouse opens on Fourth and A Streets

1879 Completion of the railroad from Petaluma to Tiburon through San Rafael

1888 – Falkirk Mansion is built for Ella Nichols Park as designed by Clinton Day

1895 – Jacob Albert opened “The Wonder” near the southwest corner of B and Fourth Streets. This was his first brick and mortar location and the beginning of his later development of the first major department store chain in the county, later to be known as Albert’s Emporium.

1903 - Completion of Northwestern Pacific Interurban Railway from San Rafael to Sausalito

1906 – Earthquake and fires in San Francisco

1929 – Construction begins on US 101 through Marin

1937- Golden Gate Bridge Opens (NWP Interurban service discontinued shortly thereafter)

1930 – The Albert Building, the city’s first high rise, and county’s first elevator, is built

1938 – Rafael Theater opens

1941 – Construction of first US 101 viaduct through central San Rafael

1950-51 – Conversion of US 101 from highway to freeway

1956 – San Rafael-Richmond Bridge opens

1958 – Kaiser Permanente physicians being practicing on Fourth Street

1962 – Completion of the Marin Civic Center

1971 – Construction of second 101 Viaduct through San Rafael

1971 – Old Courthouse is destroyed by an arsonist-induced fire

1976 – China Camp State Park established

1991 – San Rafael Transit Center opens

1993 – Downtown Vision is adopted

#### Storefront Stylistic Influences

Storefront design in San Rafael aligned to regional trends and was broadly influenced by the streetscape of nearby San Francisco. The following account on storefront stylistic influences was excerpted from the City and County of San Francisco’s Draft Historic Context Statement for Neighborhood Commercial Buildings from 1865 to 1965:

Storefront design drew from residential design elements associated with later Victorian era (circa 1870s-1900) and Edwardian era (circa 1900-1910) styles and ornament. Slender columns capped with leafy capitals were often incorporated at the storefront as were incised woodwork, and button moldings associated with Italianate, Stick-Eastlake, and Queen, Anne styles. Occasionally, window transoms were bordered with Queen Anne colored or stained glass. Bulkheads often featured raised panels similar to the wood spandrel panels found beneath the windows of residential buildings. One-story storefronts occasionally adopted a Western False Front style, with flush façade and a prominent tabbed parapet. Fluted

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pilasters, simple columns, and intermediate cornices, characterized later storefronts, which often emulated the more restrained Classical Revival designs associated with the Edwardian era.<sup>21</sup>

In 1886, The Decorator and Furnisher provided some guidance on suitable storefront design, detailing, and color: A front should, as far as possible, be so decorated as to form a suitable frame to the goods exposed in the windows, and with this object, it is often advisable to save the decorations to be completed when the trade of the occupier is known. As a general rule, however, brilliant coloring does not find favor with shopkeepers. Probably they have discovered that it detracts from the effect of the window, which may be the reason why the gaudy brass finishing, once so common, are now less in request. Sober greens, browns, chocolate, and black are suitable where there is no very broad surface to be covered, while moldings and enrichments may be picked out in gold, vermilion, and bright blue.<sup>22</sup>

Many storefronts were selected from commercial pattern books, similar to the residential pattern books that proliferated during the Victorian era. Pattern books offered a range of storefront systems, including “straight front” and “recessed front,” and numerous options for transoms, doors, moldings, and bulkhead ornamentation. Some pattern books offered cast iron storefront systems, and from the 1860s to 1910s, cast iron storefronts and elements could be ordered through catalogs.<sup>23</sup> In 1860s to 1980s, cast iron was sometime used for storefronts but most often these were framed and clad in wood

#### Storefront Differences Based on Business Types

There were significant differences in the appearance of storefronts for different types of businesses. Saloons, for example, typically did not feature window displays or shop windows and instead would “religiously screen their lower sashes with ground glass.” Ground glass has a rough nontransparent appearance, which provided light while obscuring patrons and activities within the saloon from public view. Likewise, businesses such as Faro game halls (gambling), billiards, cigar dealers, and wine cellars did not prominently display their wares or attract attention to their establishments through large shop windows and display.

The sale of food, including meat shops, poultry stands, fish stands, and other food products were typically sold behind counters and did not rely on prominent shop windows. Fruit and vegetable stores were occasionally partially open air-lacking even windows and doors-with produce staked and displayed outside the shop. At the time such shops and displayed goods were described as “open from wall to wall and even trespass upon the sidewalk.”<sup>24</sup>

#### Italianate Style

Italianate Style buildings were constructed in the United States between 1840-ca.1885. The Italianate style, along with the gothic revival, began in England as part of the Picturesque movement, a reaction of the formal classical ideals in art and architecture that had been fashionable for about two hundred years.<sup>25</sup> The movement emphasized rambling, informal Italian farmhouses, town squares, as models for Italian style villa architecture. More formal Italian models from the renaissance or ancient Rome had led to the formation of the previous era of classicism, and remained a principal artistic source during the reaction against earlier ideals. Italianate houses in the United States follow the informal rural model of the picturesque movement, and were modified, adapted and embellished. The initial Italianate houses in the United States were popularized by the influential pattern book of Andrew Jackson Downing published in the 1840s and 850s. Other books for Italianate designs were Samuel Sloan’s *The Model Architect*. Two chronological phases were distinguished in the development of the Italianate style in the United States, which include an earlier phase spanning the 1840s and 1850s with relatively simple detailing, and a later highly decorated phase from the 1860s through the 1870s (High Victorian Italianate).

The Italianate style was particularly common for the design of buildings in the expanding towns and cities of the Midwest and for the earlier towns in the area of San Francisco. The style is generally characterized by “two or three story, low pitched roof with moderate to widely overhanging eaves having decorative brackets beneath, tall, narrow windows, commonly arched or curved above windows, frequently with

<sup>21</sup> City and County of San Francisco Planning Department, *Neighborhood Commercial Buildings: Historic Context Statement 1865-1965-Draft for Public Review* (February 17, 2016), 20.

<sup>22</sup> Jessica Sewell, “Sidewalks and Store Windows as Political Landscapes,” *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, Volume 9, Constructing Image, Identity, and Place* (2003), 83: cited in City and County of San Francisco Planning Department, *Neighborhood Commercial Buildings: Historic Context Statement 1865-1965-Draft for Public Review* (February 17, 2016), 20.

<sup>23</sup> “Storefront Decoration,” *The decorator and Furnisher* (January 1886), 120: cited in City and County of San Francisco Planning Department, *Neighborhood Commercial Buildings: Historic Context Statement 1865-1965-Draft for Public Review* (February 17, 2016), 20.

<sup>24</sup> Jessica Sewell, “Sidewalks and Store Windows as Political Landscapes,” *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, Volume 9, Constructing Image, Identity, and Place* (2003), 83: cited in City and County of San Francisco Planning Department, *Neighborhood Commercial Buildings: Historic Context Statement 1865-1965-Draft for Public Review* (February 17, 2016), 23.

<sup>25</sup> Virginia Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), 282-302.

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elaborated crowns, often of inverted U shape; many examples with square cupola or tower.” Six subtypes exist of the style as well as a multitude of variants and details.”<sup>26</sup> The principal subtypes can be distinguished in simple hipped roof, centered gable, asymmetrical, towered, front-gabled roof, and town house. The principal areas of elaboration in Italianate houses are windows, cornices, porches, and doorways. Most examples comprise an intermixing of details derived from both informal rural models as well as formal Renaissance town homes.<sup>27</sup>

#### West Coast Stick Style

Stick Style buildings were constructed in the United States between 1860-ca.1890. The Stick was a transitional style that linked the Gothic Revival with the Queen Anne (a free adaptation of Medieval English building traditions). The Stick style stresses the wall surface as a decorative element. The style grew from the Picturesque Gothic ideals of Andrew Jackson Downing and flourished in house pattern books of the 1860-1870s. The visible stick work was merely applied decoration bearing no structural relation to the underlying balloon-frame construction.<sup>28</sup> These buildings had a variety of subtypes but typically included “one or more front-facing roof gables on steeply pitched roof; gables commonly show decorative trusses at apex; overhanging eaves, usually with exposed rafter ends (normally replaced by brackets in town houses); wooden wall cladding interrupted by patterns of horizontal, vertical, or diagonal boards (stickwork) raised from wall surface for emphasis; porches commonly show diagonal or curved braces.”<sup>29</sup> Few houses have all of these features in combination.

The West Coast West Stick (ca.1880-ca.1895) is typical of houses in California, which are harder to recognized from their eastern counterparts and pertain their unique set of identifying features.

“Most prominent is an almost universal square-sided bay window (box-bay), which was probably simpler to construct than its slant-sided Italianate predecessor. Decorative cornice-line brackets align with the side framing of the box-bay windows, and these two elements are connected with vertical strips of trim. In addition, cornice-line brackets usually line up with the corner of the house and long vertical strips extend from these down the corner boards. Commonly the rectangular areas above and below the windows are also filled with ornaments (such as panels), and the box-bay window ensemble thus forms a continuous decorative element from window base to cornice line. A characteristic pattern of short verticals is sometimes found beneath the cornice. The box bay window often has a false-gabled roof above it, and upper story window- panes are likely to have flat tops rather than the slight arch often found in Italianate design... During the 19<sup>th</sup> century many houses in northern California and the Pacific Coast were built of redwood. This remarkable wood is resistant to rot, termites, and many of the other hills that affect wooden houses-and a ready supply was available in the vast redwood forests of the northern California coast. These qualities have allowed elaborate redwood details to survive relatively unscathed up to present day. Automatic lathes and milling matching made possible the inexpensive mass production of details such as turned spindles and incised floral designs that previously would have required time-consuming handcrafting. This detailing, often called Eastlake, is also found on furniture. In addition to the dry wood being mechanically shaped, redwood was sometimes soaked, and incised designs were simply stamped on it.”<sup>30</sup>

#### Mission Style

California was the birthplace of the Mission style. The earliest examples were built in the 1890s, and the style spread westward in the 1900s. The style appears in house plan books such as those of Sears Roebuck and Co. that sold plans for Mission style called the Alhambra (1910). Identifying features of the Mission style include: “Mission-shaped dormer or roof parapet; commonly red tile roof covering, widely overhanging eaves, usually open porch roofs supported by large, square piers, commonly arched above, wall surface usually smooth stucco.”<sup>31</sup> Principal subtypes are distinguishable in the symmetrical and asymmetrical. Variants and details include shaped dormers and parapets mimicking those found on Spanish Colonial Mission buildings, prominent one-story porches, and arched roof supports to simulate the arcades of Hispanic buildings. Occasionally Mission-like bell towers occurred on some examples. Windows are usually double-hung and grouped together. Some examples have visor roofs that most commonly occur beneath the parapets of flat roofs.<sup>32</sup>

#### Neoclassical Style

Neoclassical style was a dominant style for domestic buildings throughout the country during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, based on the revival interest in classical models dating from the World’s Columbian Exposition of Chicago in 1893. The Neoclassical style had two main

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid

<sup>28</sup> Virginia Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), 336.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 332-333.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 336.

<sup>31</sup> Virginia Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), 510-518.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

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waves of popularity. The first dated from 1900 to 1920, proposing emphasized hipped roofs and elaborated, correct columns. The later phase manifested from about 1925 to the 1950s, emphasizing side-gabled roofs and simple, slender columns.<sup>33</sup> Character defining features of the Neoclassical style include full-eight porches, dominating facades with roof supported by classical columns with Ionic or Corinthian capitals. The neoclassical façade typically depicts symmetrically balanced windows and centered doors. Five principal subtypes can be distinguished within the neoclassical style. These include: full-height-entry porches, full-eight entry porch with lower full-width porches, front-gabled roof, full-façade porch, and one-story. The principal areas of elaboration in neoclassical buildings are porch-support columns, cornices, doorways, and windows.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Virginia Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), 334-446.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.